

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SJM 8013

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Brief Description: Calling on Congress to enact legislation to eliminate the 24 month Medicare waiting period for participants in Social Security Disability Insurance.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser, Parlette, Pflug, Franklin, Marr, Murray, Shin, Haugen, Kline and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 3/20/09, 3/26/09 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requests the President and members of Congress to eliminate the 24-month waiting period for Medicare enrollment for those individuals with an approved Social Security disability.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Driscoll, Vice Chair; Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell and Pedersen.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Herrera and Hinkle.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146)

Background:

The federal Medicare program provides health insurance for individuals over age 65, some disabled people under age 65, and people of all ages with End-Stage Renal Disease (permanent kidney failure treated with dialysis or a transplant). The Medicare system was originally administered by the Social Security Administration, but in 1977 management was transferred to the Health Care Financing Administration, which has since been renamed the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The eligibility determination and enrollment

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processes are still linked with the federal Social Security Administration, who also determines whether individuals with a permanent disability are eligible for Social Security income. After the Social Security eligibility is established, individuals may enroll in Medicare insurance after they have completed a 24-month waiting period.

Summary of Bill:

The Senate Joint Memorial requests that the President and members of Congress eliminate the 24-month waiting period for Medicare enrollment for those individuals with an approved Social Security disability.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) It is cruel and unfair to make someone who qualifies for Supplemental Security Insurance disability wait for 24 months before they qualify for Medicare coverage.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Keiser, prime sponsor; and Eugene May and Mike Partridge, National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.